

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1, 3, 5, 9, 13, 17, 22, 26 and 31 to read as follows. All of the pending claims, whether or not amended, are reproduced below.

1. (currently amended) A method for delivering goods ordered by a plurality of customers, comprising the steps of:

a plurality of customers placing orders for goods from a vendor maintaining a server on a network;

for an order placed by a given customer, the vendor server determining whether an ordered good is currently available at a local pick-up point geographically close to the given customer;

in a case where the ordered good is not currently available at the local pick-up point, the vendor fulfilling its the orders order of the given customer by combining the order of the given customer into a single shipping order ~~the~~ with goods ordered by a others from among the plurality of customers who are also geographically close to ~~a single~~ the local pick-up point; and

the vendor causing the single shipping order to be sent to a the local pick-up point.

2. (original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the goods are ordered via the Internet.

3. (currently amended) A method according to Claim 1, further comprising notifying the given customer when the order is available for pick-up.

4. (original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein a customer or customer's agent retrieves a collection of goods from the vendor from the local pick-up point.

5. (currently amended) A method for designating local receipt of items ordered from a vendor at a remote location, comprising the steps of:

the customer placing an order for at least one item via a sever maintained by a vendor on a network;

the customer providing to the vendor the customer's location via the vendor server;

the customer choosing a local pick-up point from among local pick-up points offered by the vendor; and

the vendor server determining whether the at least one item is currently available at the chosen local pick-up point and in a case where it is not fulfilling the order by delivering the at least one item to the chosen local pick-up point; and

upon receipt of the ~~ordered items~~ at least one item at the local pick-up point, the customer receiving notification that the order is available for pick-up.

6. (original) A method according to Claim 5, wherein the designation is done via the Internet.

7. (original) A method according to Claim 5, further comprising a step of the customer or customer's agent retrieving a collection of goods from the vendor from the local pick-up point.

8. (original) A method according to Claim 5, further comprising:
the customer selecting from among options relating to the pick-up point customized on the basis of the type of items ordered, and/or the pick-up capability of the customer.

9. (currently amended) A method for delivering goods ordered by a plurality of customers, comprising the steps of:
a plurality of customers placing orders for goods from a plurality of vendors via servers maintained by the vendors on a network;
for an order placed by a given customer, each vendor fulfilling their
orders by the order by determining via the respective vendor server if the goods are
currently available at a local pick-up point geographically close to the given customer, and
in a case where the goods are not currently available combining the given order into
individual a single shipping orders the order with goods ordered by those from among the plurality of customers who are geographically close to respective local pick-up points; and
the vendors causing the respective shipping orders to be sent to the respective local pick-up points.

10. (original) A method according to Claim 9, wherein a customer or customer's agent retrieves a collection of goods from one or more of the plurality of vendors from the local pick-up point.

11. (original) A method according to Claim 9, wherein the orders are placed via the Internet.

12. (original) A method according to Claim 9, further comprising:
the customer selecting from among options relating to the pick-up point customized on the basis of the type of items ordered, and/or the pick-up capability of the customer.

13. (currently amended) An apparatus for controlling delivery of goods to a plurality of customers, the apparatus comprising:

means for receiving orders from a plurality of customers;

means for determining whether an ordered good is currently available at a local pick-up point geographically close to an ordering customer;

means for fulfilling the ~~customers' orders~~ ordering customer's order by, in a case where the ordered good is not currently available at the local pick-up point, combining the order into ~~individual~~ a shipping order ~~the order with~~ goods ordered by those from among the plurality of customers who are geographically close to respective local pick-up points; and

means for causing ~~the~~ respective shipping orders to be sent to ~~the~~ respective local pick-up points.

14. (original) An apparatus according to Claim 13, wherein the orders are received via the Internet.

15. (original) An apparatus according to Claim 13, wherein a customer or customer's agent retrieves a collection of goods from the local pick-up point.

16. (original) An apparatus according to Claim 13, further including:
means operable to allow the customer to select from among options relating to the pick-up point customized on the basis of the type of items ordered, and/or the pick-up capability of the customer.

17. (currently amended) A system, having multiple vendors, for allowing the multiple vendors to consolidate shipping of goods to customers, each vendor having an apparatus comprising:

means for receiving orders from a plurality of customers;

means for determining whether ordered goods are currently available at local pick-up points geographically close to ordering customers;

means for fulfilling the customers' orders by in those cases where ordered goods are not currently available at geographically close local pick-up points, combining into individual shipping orders the goods ordered by those from among the plurality of customers who are geographically close to respective local pick-up points; and

means for causing the respective shipping orders to be sent to the respective local pick-up points.

18. (original) A system according to Claim 17, wherein the multiple vendors' apparatuses are connected on a network.

19. (original) A system according to Claim 18, wherein the network is the Internet.

20. (original) A system according to Claim 17, wherein a customer or customer's agent retrieves a collection of goods from the respective local pick-up point.

21. (original) A system according to Claim 17, wherein each vendor's apparatus further comprises:

means operable to allow the customer to select from among options relating to the pick-up point customized on the basis of the type of items ordered, and/or the pick-up capability of the customer.

22. (currently amended) A shopping server on a network ~~comprising~~ including a plurality of vendor servers[[,]] and a plurality of customer client terminals, ~~and local pick-up points~~, the shopping server being operable to:

receive orders from a customer terminal for purchase of a good;

communicate with one of ~~the~~ a plurality of local pick-up points in proximity to the customer who ordered the good, to determine if the ordered good is currently available at the local pick-up point; and

if the good is not currently available at the local pick-up point, communicate with one of the vendor servers to initiate delivery of the ordered good to the local pick-up point.

23. (original) A shopping server according to Claim 22, wherein the network is the Internet.

24. (original) A shopping server according to Claim 22, wherein a customer or customer's agent retrieves a collection of goods from the local pick-up point.

25. (original) A shopping server according to Claim 22, wherein the server is further operable to:

allow the customer to select from among options relating to the pick-up point customized on the basis of the type of items ordered, and/or the pick-up capability of the customer.

26. (currently amended) A system, having multiple vendors, for allowing the multiple vendors to consolidate shipping of goods to fulfill customer orders received over a network, each vendor having a network server operable to:

receive orders from a plurality of customers;

determine whether ordered goods are currently available at local pick-up points geographically close to ordering customers;

fulfil the customers' orders by in those cases where ordered goods are not currently available at geographically close local pick-up points, combining into individual shipping orders the goods ordered by those from among the plurality of customers who are geographically close to respective local pick-up points; and

cause the respective shipping orders to be sent to the respective local pick-up points.

27. (original) A system according to Claim 26, wherein the network is the Internet.

28. (original) A system according to Claim 26, the network server being further operable to:

coordinate with the multiple vendors so as to arrange for shared shipping of ordered goods when respective ones from among the multiple vendors have received orders to be sent to the identical local pick-up points.

29. (original) A system according to Claim 26, wherein a customer or customer's agent retrieves a collection of goods from the local pick-up point.

30. (original) A system according to Claim 26, the network server being further operable to allow the customer to select from among options relating to the pick-up point customized on the basis of the type of items ordered, and/or the pick-up capability of the customer.

31. (currently amended) Computer code storable on a computer-readable medium and executable on a network server, said code comprising:

- code for receiving orders from a plurality of customers;
- code for determining whether an ordered good is currently available at a local pick-up point geographically close to the ordering customer;
- code for fulfilling the ~~customers' orders~~ ordering customers order by, in a case where the ordered good is not currently available at the local pick-up point, combining the order into ~~individual~~ a shipping order ~~the order with~~ goods ordered by those from among the plurality of customers who are geographically close to respective local pick-up points; and
- code for causing ~~the~~ respective shipping orders to be sent to ~~the~~ respective local pick-up points.

32. (original) Computer code according to Claim 31, wherein the network is the Internet.

33. (original) Computer code according to Claim 31, wherein a customer or customer's agent retrieves a collection of goods from the local pick-up point.

34. (original) Computer code according to Claim 31, further comprising code to allow the customer to select from among options relating to the pick-up point customized on the basis of the type of items ordered, and/or the pick-up capability of the customer.